

Testimony to the MTA Board Congestion Pricing, Fare Evasion and 20 Needs Assessment March 27, 2019

Good morning, my name is Lisa Daglian and I am the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA – PCAC.

We are very encouraged by the news out of Albany indicating that congestion pricing will become a reality. That's good news for the entire region. Reducing congestion will not only help speed buses, emergency vehicles and freight deliveries within the congestion zone, it will prevent billions of pounds of greenhouse gas emissions per year. While that's especially beneficial for those with asthma, it will help us all breathe a little easier.

We'll also be able to breathe a little easier knowing that approximately \$15 billion, once bonded, will be available for the FY2020 – 24 Capital Plan, and help fund *Fast Forward*, *LIRR Forward* and *Metro-North Way Ahead*. Critical upgrades to track and station infrastructure, modernization of signals, improved accessibility and new rolling stock are some of the benefits we can expect to see. While it ain't over til it's over and the budget is passed, we appear to be on the right track.

We're encouraged by the progress that is being made and are proud to be part of the hardworking Fix Our Transit coalition, which is fighting for the region's transit and economic future. The fight must also continue within the agencies, and we applaud procurement of the 123 new bus lane enforcement cameras that you will be voting on today for SBS routes in Brooklyn and Manhattan. We hope the program proves to be successful and will be expanded throughout the city. We also hope that the stringent fare evasion enforcement measures discussed in detail on Monday prove to be successful. More than \$225 million a year is a stake – not quite enough to buy Ken Griffin's townhouse, but certainly enough to make a real difference in the quality of riders' commutes – from Montauk to Wassaic, and all points between.

But there's still more to be done. Up to \$60 billion may be needed for the next capital plan – meaning that there is still a huge hole to fill. It's important to keep the conversation focused on reliable and sustainable funding sources for the MTA even after this budget is passed. One way the MTA can do that is to release the 20-year needs assessment. Late in comparison to previous years, this assessment paves the way for context and development of the Capital Program. That's the best way to show the public and elected officials specific projects and needs for the years ahead, how Congestion Pricing money will be spent – and how much more needs to be identified to meet the needs of the entire system.